

REMARKS

Claims 1-34 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 6 and 17 are amended.

The Office Action rejects claims 6 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claims 6 and 17 are amended to obviate this rejection.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-5, 7-16 and 18-34 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Publication No. 2004/0195295 A1 to Yudasaka. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants claim foreign priority of application JP 10-67508 filed March 17, 1998 and JP 11-32123 filed February 10, 1999, as well as domestic priority of application 09/423,969 filed November 17, 1999. Yudasaka claims priority to International PCT Application No. PCT/J99/01289 (the '289 application) filed March 16, 1999. Because the filing date of the '289 application is not on or after November 29, 2000, it is not effective as prior art until the actual filing date of the U.S. application that claimed benefit of the international application. See e.g., MPEP 2136.02 (II). The earliest filed U.S. application is Application No. 09/424,044, filed on November 18, 1999. This filing date is after the date of the invention of the present application.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Michael Britton
Registration No. 47,260

JAO:MB/kzb

Date: April 14, 2005

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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